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Gaza death toll has been significantly underreported, study finds



By [Sophie Tanno](#), CNN

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The body of an 18-month-old is carried by her uncle for burial in the aftermath of an Israeli airstrike in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, on December 5. Abdel Kareem Hana/AP

(CNN) — The number of people killed in Gaza is significantly higher than the figure reported by authorities in the enclave, a peer-reviewed study by researchers from a leading health research university in the UK has found.

According to findings announced by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and published in The Lancet journal, there were an estimated 64,260 “traumatic injury deaths” in Gaza between October 7, 2023 and June 30, 2024. The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza put the figure at 37,877 at the time.

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This means the ministry has underreported the death toll due to violence by approximately 41%, the researchers found. As of October, the number of Gazans killed by violence was thought to exceed 70,000, the study said, based on the estimated underreporting rate.

The total death toll attributable to Israel's military campaign is likely to be higher still, it said, as its analysis doesn't account for deaths caused by disruption to health care, insufficient food, clean water and sanitation, and disease outbreaks.

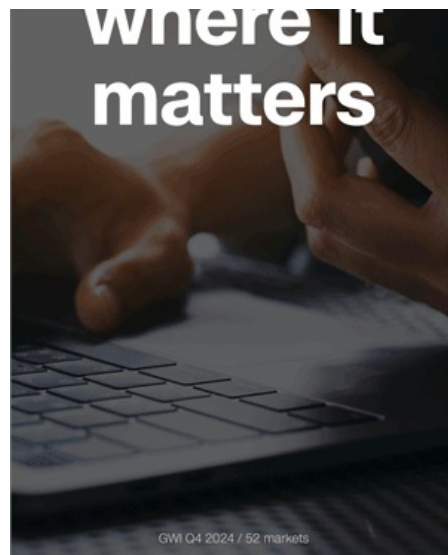
The health ministry's figure stood at 45,885 on January 7. A further 109,196 have been injured. In general, the ministry reaches its figures by counting the corpses of those killed.



Women mourn their relatives killed by Israeli bombardment outside the Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir el-Balah on January 5. Eyad Baba/AFP/Getty Images

LSHTM said the findings suggest that around 3% of the enclave's population has died due to violence, 59% of whom were women, children, and the elderly.

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The discrepancy with the ministry's figures reflects the destruction of Gaza's healthcare infrastructure and therefore its inability to accurately count the dead amid Israel's ongoing bombardment of the enclave, the LSHTM said.

Researchers analyzed data from multiple sources, including the health ministry's hospital morgue records, a respondent-driven online survey and obituaries on social media.

They arrived at estimated figures using a statistical method known as 'capture-recapture analysis,' which is used when not all of the relevant data is recorded.

Zeina Jamaluddine, lead author at LSHTM, said the results "underscore the urgent need for interventions to safeguard civilians and prevent further loss of life."

Israel's 14-month war in Gaza, launched in response to Hamas' October 7 attack, has decimated large swathes of the enclave and destroyed key healthcare infrastructure while placing an enormous strain on hospitals that remain functional.

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Last month, a report from Human Rights Watch (HRW) found that Israel had deliberately been depriving Palestinians in Gaza of access to clean water, which has fueled the spread of disease and caused deaths likely in the thousands.

The scale of the devastation caused by a lack of water may likely never be fully understood, HRW warned, due to the decimation of Gaza's health care system including disease tracking.

HRW and Amnesty International have both accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, which Israel strongly denies. Israel has also been taken to the UN's top court, the International Court of Justice, on allegations of genocide.

Earlier this week, a Palestinian newborn died from hypothermia in Gaza, bringing the total number of babies killed by low temperatures and a lack of access to warm shelters in recent weeks to at least six.

Eight people in total have died of hypothermia, according to health officials in the enclave, including a 2-year-old toddler and a nurse.

Aid group Médecins Sans Frontières said on Wednesday that three hospitals

in Gaza, Nasser hospital, Al-Aqsa hospital and European Gaza hospital, are on the verge of closure due to a lack of fuel. "This situation is threatening the lives of hundreds of patients, including newborns, who depend on electricity to stay alive," it said.

CNN's Abeer Salman contributed to this report.

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